

His Majesties

LETTER

TO THE

Lord Bishop

OF

LONDON,

To be Communicated to the

TWO PROVINCES
OF

Canterbury and York.



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*His Majesties Letter to the Right Reverend
Father in GOD, Henry Lord Bishop of Lon-
don, to be Communicated to the Two Pro-
vinces of Canterbury and York.*

WILLIAM R.

Right Reverend Father in God, We Greet you well.
Whereas the Advancement of the Honour and Service
of Almighty God, and of the Protestant Religion,
which by his wonderful Providence hath been preserv-
ed and established in these Kingdoms, ought to be the chief part
of Our Royal Care: In Order to this, as We have oftentimes
Declared, That We would take the Church of England by Law
Established, into Our particular Protection and Favour; So We
take this Occasion to Renew these Assurances, being Resolved
to do all We can for the Support and Strengthening of it; Preserv-
ing withal the Liberty of Conscience to all Our other Protestant
Subjects, which by Our Laws they now Enjoy.

And because the Welfare, Peace and Honour of this Church
depends so much upon all Persons faithfully doing their Duties
in their several Places and Functions, We therefore First of all
Charge and Require you the Bishops of this Our Church, to
apply your selves with all Diligence and Zeal to the Duties of
your Episcopal Function, according to the Word of God, the
Orders of this Church, and the Laws of this Our Realm.

More especially as to Ordination of Ministers, We Require
you to use all possible Care and Strictness, in Examining and En-
quiring into the Lives and Learning of such Persons as desire to
be admitted into Holy Orders, and herein constantly to observe
the* Canons relating thereunto; the Neglect whereof We shall
strictly Enquire into, and take Care that it be Punished accord-
ing to Law.

* Can. 31, 32,
33, 34, 35, 36.

We also Charge and Require you to keep a strict Watch over
all the Clergy in your respective Diocesses, to see that they be
duly Resident upon their Livings according to the Laws in that
Case provided, and that there they be Constant and Diligent in
their Duties, performing the Publick Offices of Worship Gravely
and Devoutly, Preaching the Word of God Plainly and Practi-
cally, without running into needless Controversies, and Admini-
string the Holy Sacraments Frequently, with that Reverence
which is due to the Institutions of Christ; Also Catechizing the
Youth, Visiting the Sick and Distressed, and doing all such
Things in their Stations as may tend to promote the Honour of
God and True Religion, together with Peace and Charity a-
mong all their Neighbours; Themselves giving a good Example
to their Flock, by walking before them in all Holy Conversation
and Godliness.

And the more effectually to prevent the Scandals that may arise by any Disorders in the Lives of those who ought to be Examples to others, you shall Admonish them Religiously to observe the * Canon Entitled, *Sober Consideration required in Ministers*. And you shall Severely and Impartially proceed by Ecclesiastical Censures, against all such of your Clergy as shall be found guilty of any Notorious Violation of this or any other Law or Canon relating to their Duty.

And for the better Encouragement of Deserving Men, as We intend to make it a Rule to Our Self, so We also Require it of you, in Disposing of Church Preferments, to have a special Regard to such Persons as by their Piety, Learning, Diligence and Peaceableness, do most promote the Honour of God, and the Edification of his Church.

And because, as Our Duty requires, We most earnestly desire and shall endeavour a General Reformation of the Lives and Manners of all Our Subjects, as being that which must Establish Our Throne, and secure to Our People their Religion, Happiness and Peace; all which seem to be in great Danger at this time, by reason of that overflowing of Vice, which is too notorious in this, as well as other Neighbouring Nations. We therefore require you to Order all the Clergy to Preach frequently against those particular Sins and Vices which are most prevailing in this Realm; And that on every of those Lords Days on which any such Sermon is to be Preach'd, they do also Read to their People such Statute-Law or Laws as are provided against that Vice or Sin, which is their Subject on that Day, as namely, against * Blasphemy, Swearing and Cursing; Against † Perjury; against ‖ Drunkenness; and against * Prophanation of the Lords Day: All which Statutes We have Ordered to be Printed together with these Our Letters, that so they may be Transmitted by you to every Parish within this Our Realm.

And whereas there is as yet no sufficient Provision by any Statute-law for the Punishing of *Adultery and Fornication, You shall therefore require all Church-Wardens in your Diocesses to Present impartially all those that are guilty of any such Crimes in their several Parishes; And upon such Presentments, We require you to proceed without delay, and upon sufficient proof, to inflict those Censures which are appointed by Our Ecclesiastical Laws against such Offenders: In doing whereof, according to your Duty, you shall not want Our effectual Assistance and Support.

And for the better Carrying on of so good a Work, We do in the last place, Charge and Require you to Preach frequently yourselves, to Confer often with your Clergy, and to Enquire by all proper means into all Abuses and Corruptions in your Diocesses, in order to a full and speedy Reformation. And all this, not only as you shall Answer it to Us, but also as considering the great Charge that God hath Committed to you, and the Account that you must give him for it at the Great Day. And so We bid you heartily Farewel.

Given at Our Court at Whitehall the 13th day of February, 16⁸⁹. In the Second year of Our Reign.

By His Majesties Command,
Shrewsbury.

* 21 Jac.
Cap. 10.
† 5 Eliz.
Cap. 9.
‖ 4 Jac.
Cap. 5.
2 Jac.
Cap. 7.
* 29 Car. 2.
Cap. 7.

